



California's Natural Wildlands Legacy

Colorado Desert

Bureau of Land Management California

The Colorado Desert is a subdivision of the larger Sonoran Desert and encompasses most of southeastern California. Its name comes from the Colorado River, which flows through it on the eastern edge of California. Because of its low elevation and scarcity of summer rain, the Colorado Desert is the largest, lowest, hottest, and driest subregion within the Sonoran Desert. The lowest elevations are below sea level and temperatures can rise in excess of 120 degrees in July and August. Annual rainfall rarely exceeds three inches.

The Colorado and Mojave deserts meld together to create a rich tapestry of vast landscapes, significant historic and prehistoric cultural resources, rugged canyons, unusual wildlife, palm oases, and majestic wilderness areas. In recognition of these important and unique resources, Congress created the 25-million acre California Desert Conservation Area in 1976, adding the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument in October 2000. To meet the challenges of managing such a diversity of resources in a region of intense population pressures, and with extensive public involvement, BLM is preparing four major ecosystem management plans that will update and amend the CDCA Plan.

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains provide a world-renown scenic backdrop to the desert communities of the Coachilla Valley. The 272,000 acre monument gives residents and visitors a powerful sense of place for their natural scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and extensive wildlife, plant, and cultural values. The designation culminates years of effort by government agencies and officials, property owners and preservation minded groups.



Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

The Preserve is located where the Mojave and Colorado deserts and the coastal environment meet. Plants and animals of all three ecosystems come together in this unusual location. Established to protect wildlife and other sensitive natural resources, the canyon contains a desert oasis with a year-round water source providing habitat for hundreds of wildlife species.

Dos Palmas Preserve

The lush greenery of the Dos Palmas Preserve is a stark contrast to the dry landscape of southern California's Colorado Desert. Hundreds of California fan palms dominate this desert oasis tucked between the Salton Sea and the Orocochia Mountains. Artesian springs that feed the oasis are magnets for life and provide habitat for many wildlife species.

Algodones Dunes

The Algodones Dunes, one of the largest sand dune systems in the United States, was created from the windblown beach sands of ancient Lake Cahuilla. Portions of the dunes are a wilderness area and living laboratory to study and enjoy the rare plants and animals that thrive in this desert ecosystem. Another portion of the dunes, the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, is one of the country's most popular off-highway vehicle recreation playgrounds.

San Sebastian Marsh/San Felipe Creek ACEC

San Felipe Creek and San Sebastian Marsh are designated critical habitat for the desert pupfish, an endangered species. Because of its importance in sustaining this unique marshland environment, San Felipe Creek is a registered National Natural Landmark. The area around the creek and marsh is very sensitive and easily damaged, however, it is accessible to hikers.

Yuha Desert

The Yuha Desert contains portions of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, geoglyphs created by Native Americans, an area of rare crucifixion thorn trees, fossil oyster shell beds, and the Yuha Well.



"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value."

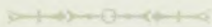
Theodore Roosevelt



Your lands....Your legacy!



The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument exemplifies the partnership efforts within the Coachella Valley.



Dos Palmas Preserve and Area for Critical Environmental Concern provides habitat for many threatened, endangered or sensitive species



Part of the Algodones Dunes is set aside as a wilderness area and living laboratory

Goals for the Colorado Desert

Preserve this fragile desert with its magnificent assets, while providing access for environmental and recreational opportunities



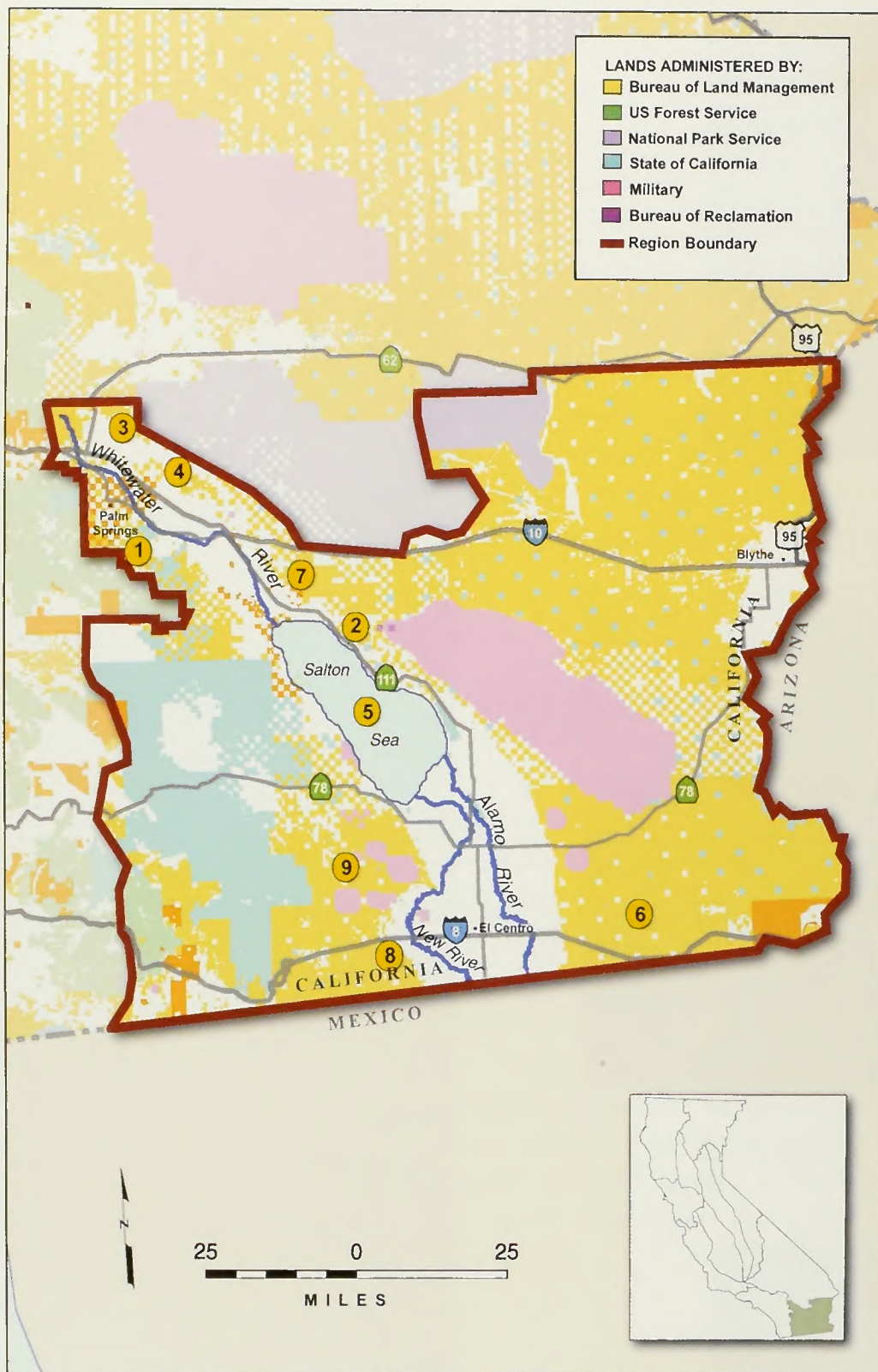
Partnerships

Imperial Sand Dunes TRT
 Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
 The Nature Conservancy
 U.S. Border Patrol
 Center for Natural Lands Management
 California State Parks
 Imperial, San Diego and Riverside Counties
 Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
 Friends of the Desert Mountains
 The Sierra Club
 Desert Managers Group
 Salton Sea State Park
 Friends of Big Morongo Preserve
 San Diego Association of Governments
 Trust for Public Lands
 Wildlands Conservancy
 Riverside Land Conservancy



Key Assets of the Colorado Desert

- Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument
- Dos Palmas Preserve and ACEC
- Big Morongo Preserve
- Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard Preserve
- Salton Sea
- Algodones Dunes/Imperial Sand Dunes
- Mecca Hills Wilderness
- Yuha Desert
- San Sebastian Marsh and San Felipe Creek ACEC



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